

PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT

Contract No. EP-C-09-020
Work Assignment (WA) B-07

TITLE: National Lakes Assessment Report - Peer Review

WORK ASSIGNMENT MANAGER:

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PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: From date of issuance to November 15, 2009

ESTIMATED LEVEL OF EFFORT: 170 hours

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE:

This work assignment is to provide support for the peer review process for EPA's National Lakes Assessment (NLA) report. The National Lakes Assessment uses a probability-based network that will provide statistically valid information with known confidence. It was designed such that sample lakes are selected at random to represent the conditions of all lakes in regions that share similar ecological characteristics. In 2007, EPA, states and partners sampled over 1,200 lakes across the country. Laboratory and data analysis were completed in 2008 and the findings are to be presented in a report to be published in December 2009.

The purpose is to conduct an external peer review to evaluate the scientific credibility of the NLA report prior to its release. The overall focus for the reviewers is to assess the technical merits of the analysis contained in the draft report. Reviewers with expertise in aquatic ecological, biological, and human health procedures and analysis, and environmental statistical experts will be needed.

Contractor support is needed to identify, screen and engage suitable person to technically review and provide timely comment on the draft report. EPA will transmit to the contractor a copy of the draft report and a sample letter to potential expert reviewers. Specific questions for consideration and charge for the reviewers will be provided by the EPA WAM. These materials will be available to the contractor early September 2009. Peer reviewers will be selected based on their qualifications and availability. The EPA WAM shall review and consent to the qualifications of the pool of peer reviewer candidates, but the ultimate selection of peer reviewers from the approved pool shall be the responsibility of the Contractor.

DESCRIPTION OF TASKS:

Task 1. Work Plan, Budget and Reporting

The contractor shall prepare a work plan and financial budget that describes how it will execute the work assignment, quantifies the level of effort required, calculates associated costs, and characterizes potential problems that may arise. In addition, the contractor shall provide monthly progress and financial reports. The contractor shall notify the EPA WAM immediately upon encountering a significant problem that may cause a delay or impede the progress of the work assignment in any way.

Deliverables:

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| 1.. | Work plan and budget | Within 21 calendar days of receipt of WA |
| 2. | Progress/budget reports | Per contract Reports of Work Attachment 2 |
| 3. | Report problem | Immediately upon discovery |

Task 2. Conduct Peer Review

The contractor shall identify and select peer reviewers, conduct the peer review, and prepare a summary of the reviewers' comments as specified in this PWS. All activities shall be performed in accordance with Agency Peer Review Policy procedures outlined in *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Peer Review Handbook*, 3rd edition, 2006 (EPA/100/B-06/002).

2a: Identify Peer Reviewer Pool

The Contractor shall prepare and submit to the EPA WAM the credentials of seven to eight nationally recognized technical experts who are qualified to independently peer review the draft NLA report according to EPA's peer review guidelines. The potential pool of peer reviewers shall include experts outside of EPA with experience in one or more of the following: 1) water resource monitoring and reporting at a national scale, 2) water quality survey design, and 3) lake condition assessments using biological, water chemistry or physical habitat indicators. Expertise may be demonstrated by publication in scientific journals or known research professional or experience. The peer review panel shall not include any experts that directly or indirectly contributed to the analysis used in the report. The Contractor shall provide to EPA the peer reviewers' curriculum vitae.

The EPA WAM will review and approve the potential pool of peer reviewers based on their credentials and expertise to fulfill the role of peer reviewers of EPA technical documents. The EPA WAM may reject the use of a particular candidate based on qualifications, conflicts of interest, or past direct involvement with the work under review. In such cases, the Contractor shall find suitable replacements to bring the pool back to the original number. The EPA WAM shall review and consent to the qualifications of the pool of peer reviewer candidates, but the ultimate selection of peer reviewers from the approved pool shall be the responsibility of the Contractor.

Following the EPA WAM's approval of the peer reviewer pool, the Contractor shall select up to four peer reviewers and determine their availability for the task. The Contractor shall select at least one reviewer from each of the areas of expertise described above.

2b: Conduct Peer Review

The Contractor shall distribute the draft National Lakes Assessment report (and any other documents EPA identifies such as appendices) and the Charge to Peer Reviewers (provided by EPA) to each selected peer reviewer. The Contractor also shall provide to the peer reviewers any supplemental information requested by the reviewers and deemed necessary by the EPA WAM to complete a thorough review. The Contractor shall coordinate with the peer reviewers and monitor peer reviewers' progress to complete the review within the required time frame. Peer reviewers shall conduct their review according to the guidelines detailed in the charge. The Contractor shall inform all selected peer reviewers that there shall be no contact with EPA personnel or authors or contributors acknowledged in the draft report.

Reviewers shall be allotted **3 weeks** in which to conduct their review. Peer reviewers shall submit their comments and respond to the specific questions posed in the charge electronically to the Contractor. In turn, the Contractor shall forward to the WAM each peer reviewers' comments as soon as they become available. EPA assumes that a single peer review would take a total of 40 hours or less.

Deliverables:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Identify peer reviewer pool | |
| and transmit to EPA WAM for approval | by September 15, 2009 |
| 2. Select and notify 4 peer reviewers | by September 18, 2009 |
| 3. Conduct peer review | Between September 21, 2009 and
October 23, 2009 |

Task 3: Prepare Peer Review Report

Upon obtaining comments from the peer reviewers, the Contractor shall assemble the peer review comments and prepare a brief summary of key comments. The contractor shall assist in contacting reviewers if necessary to clarify reviewers' comments. The report shall include: 1) an introduction that clearly and concisely provides an overview of the comments, 2) a summary of the reviewers' responses to the specific questions outlined in the peer review charge document, 3) a summary of key peer reviewers' recommendations of changes or revisions required to improve clarity and scientific accuracy of the document, 4) any new information or data provided by peer reviewers that potentially improves the quality of the document, and 5) any additional materials submitted by peer reviewers. The Contractor shall also include as an appendix all unedited peer review comments. The Contractor shall submit the draft report to the EPA WAM electronically.

The EPA WAM and EPA technical experts will review the draft peer review report submitted by the Contractor for clarity and thoroughness. The EPA WAM's comments will in no way be technical in nature or question the opinions of the reviewers. At the EPA WAM's request for clarification, the Contractor shall contact the peer reviewer and obtain the needed

clarification. Following EPA's review of the draft peer review report, the Contractor shall make any appropriate edits identified by EPA staff and resubmit to the EPA WAM a final peer review report.

Deliverables:

Peer review report

October 30, 2009

TRAVEL

No travel is anticipated under this work assignment amendment.